FOREIGN GOSSIP.

—An English railway company has adopted the plan of painting its cars with Balmain phosphorescent paint, which affords sufficient light while passing through tunnels.

—The dispatches report that the brain of Gambetta weighed 1,100 grammes, or less than thirty-nine ounces. The maximum weight of the healthy brain in man is about sixty-four ounces, and the minimum about thirty-one.

—A piece of rose point lace at the London Aquarium six and three-fourths yards long, is valued at $5,000. There are ninety-six sprays to each inch of the fabric, and each spray cost two days' labor, showing that it required the seven years' work of a skilled workman to complete the trifle.

—The King of Greece speaks English, French, German, Greek and Danish. In conversing together their Grecian majesties use the German language, in speaking with their children they employ English, and to the general household they speak in Greek.

—During the epidemic of typhoid fever in Paris much was said of the valuable results gained in the hospitals by the use of heavy doses of quinine. But the *Progres Medical* discovers that the quinine used was adulterated with sixty-six per cent of other matter, and now the question arises, were the good results really obtained, and, if so, what is the true value of quinine?

—A dealer in human hair at Birmingham was recently robbed of eighty-seven pounds of the choicest specimens, cultivated by Swedish girls for the market, varying in length from twenty-four to thirty-three inches, the latter, if of good quality, realizing about a sovereign an ounce, and the whole of the aggregate value of $2,000.

—A Fellow of the Royal College of Surgery, London, was lately fined ten dollars and costs for "furiously riding a tricycle." He was traveling so rapidly that a constable on horseback had great difficulty in catching him, though it was shown in court that the surgeon had already traveled sixty miles that day on his machine.

—The fifteen forts that now surround the city of Rome have an extent of about twenty-five miles, so that the vanguard of a besieging party would have to occupy no less a circuit than thirty-two miles, and the main force a circuit of thirty-eight miles. On the most modest computation the besieging army would, therefore, employ from 150,000 to 160,000 men.

—A godsend is the telephone to the imperial family Nihilist-besieged at Gatschina. It enables them to hear at will their favorite prima donna without exposing themselves to the deadly bomb or forcing the singers to come to the bomb-proof palace. A wire has been run from Gatschina to the Marinsky Theater, St. Petersburg, forty miles away, and over it are conveyed to the listening ears of timid royalty all the music, vocal and instrumental, and the dialogue and the popular applause, too, of every opera there performed.

—A strange case of mistaken identity has recently come to light at Gateshead. Some time ago a seafaring man named Joseph Kilford was missing. It was known that his vessel had entered the river, and that he had landed, but no further tidings could be obtained of him. In the meantime his body was found in the river. An inquest was held, the body was identified, a verdict that Joseph Kilford was found drowned in the River Tyne was returned, and the body was buried. Two weeks ago Kilford turned up alive and well. It appeared that just after his arrival in the Tyne he again took ship, and while his friends had been mourning his death he had been in America.

"The Old Man of the Mountain."

It is certain that we English-speaking people readily appropriate whatever we choose from our neighbors who speak other tongues. If Latins, Greeks and others could rise and claim their own, we should have our dictionaries greatly reduced in size.

This reflection was suggested by the word "assassin," the history of which was recalled in a recent search which it was the duty of the present writer to make into the career of *The Old Man of the Mountain*. This personage is commonly counted mythical, or a mere poetic description, while he is a true historical official. His career and principles are suggestive in a high degree, and it may be for the enlightenment of some others to share the knowledge gained with the readers of the *Ledger*.

It is the common idea that Mohammedanism is a unit, free of the divisions into which Christians have grouped themselves. This, however, is a mistake. At an early period in the history of the system its adherents were divided into the orthodox or Sunnites, and the Shiites. The strife began regarding the legitimate successor of the Prophet. The Shiites were for his son-in-law, Ali, but did not make good their point. Then who was Ali's legitimate heir? This question divided the Shiites again into several parties, chief among which stood the Ismaelites, who took their name from the seventh in unbroken line from Ali. In view of these facts those "thinkers" who compliment oriental religion at the expense of Christianity, with its sects, would do well to reconsider.

Persia was the home of the Sunnites, and the Caliphs at Bagdad were their aversion. Availing himself of this aversion, Abdallah, one of the Magi, raised himself to power by organizing a secret society. He was an "advanced thinker" and taught to the initiated that as to outward acts there were no lines between right and wrong, that the inward disposition only was of value; and that the earthly vice-gerents of the real rulers were to be obeyed without asking any questions. If anybody quoted the Koran against him, he had invented a non-natural interpretation of it, which would make it teach anything he liked. He, of course, was the vice-gerent, and under him was a graded hierarchy, only the upper ranks of which were initiated. The members of the lower rendered blind obedience.

The sect revolted against the Caliphs, but was put down. One of its adherents, however, contrived to win the throne of Egypt, and found a dynasty called the Fatimites. It will be remembered that Fatima was Mohammed's daughter. They claimed descent from her, and took her name. Then Ismaelism had its way in Egypt. Cairo was the center of a grand lodge. Hassan, a learned member of the Eastern Ismaelites and a refugee from Persia, with a romantic history, had at first a warm welcome, but at length was compelled to flee. After all manner of hair-breadth escapes he settled in Persia, contrived to get a strong castle among the mountains, and there perfected the system of Abdallah. He was more practical than his master. The first generation of believers in practical doctrines does not always work them out to their logical issues. Time is needed. Adopting the Cairo organization, and the principles of Abdallah, he taught his adherents that the outward act was nothing, the thought everything, and that therefore anything the vice-gerent of the invisible rulers ordered was right. But there were enemies here and there. What then? Murder them secretly. It is but an outward act—the motive justifies it. He was Sheik-al-Jebal, the historic *Old Man of the Mountain*, as the phrase, loosely rendered, means. Three grand priors ruled under him and over a body of priors duly initiated and controlling associates (*Refiks*) not yet initiated, and next to them the Fedais, or devoted ones, to whom was intrusted the commission of deeds of blood.

But how about the "Assassins?" True Mohammedans are forbidden wine. But there are many ways of getting drunk without the juice of the grape, as New Yorkers ought to know. From hemp leaves a preparation was made called *hashish*. Drugged with this the young men—the devoted ones selected for a murder—were turned into the Sheikh's garden and allowed to run riot in all the supposed delights of a Mohammedan's Paradise. They were then directed to do the will of him who gave such joys, and they did it, whether among his enemies or among the common people who were kept in ignorance, but held rigidly to the rules of Mohammedanism, while their superiors believed in nothing and ridiculed their simplicity. From the drug which prepared them for crime—an experience, alas! common enough elsewhere—they were called *hashishim*, from the singular of which *assassin* came into Europe, probably through the Crusaders.

Secret societies for horrible purposes are not modern inventions. To read the history of Hassan's methods recalls the recent organization in Russia, which is largely permeated with traditions, customs and beliefs of the early and near Orient. An old friend of Hassan's fell under the dagger, and his son by the poison, of the Assassins. A Sultan was supposed to be their victim, and his son made peace with them rather than battle at such odds.

Evil-doers often reap in their own circles the seed they sow. This brilliant scoundrel killed his own sons. His successors, often beaten on the field, avenged themselves by secret murders. Internal strifes had the like results, and one wearies of the list of atrocities on kindred, friends, allies, rivals, enemies, from generation to generation, down to the time of the Crusaders, some of whom, it is believed, fell under their secret treachery. Strifes among themselves, the secession of a Syrian branch which made itself independent, (and of which remains are still supposed to exist), the invasion of their territory by the Tartars, who, for their treachery when beaten on the field, massacred twelve thousand of them, and other calamities, broke their power, and destroyed their organization. So passed out of the world, after three hundred years of atrocities, the Old Man of the Mountain, leaving, however, over a wide region a certain traditional loose view of secret murder. Even in India the traces of the order, it is believed, have been found in our time.—*Rev. John Hall, D. D., in N. Y. Ledger.*

Opium in China.

Tobacco came to China early in the seventeenth century, and tobacco-smoking originated opium-smoking in the islands of Java and Formosa. From this last island opium-smoking spread as a popular habit into China about the year 1720. The first prohibitory edict issued at Peking was in 1729. From that time the habit went on quietly as a social disease, insidiously extending itself without much attention being paid to it till the end of the eighteenth century, when viceroys began to show alarm. From that time the great scourge of China forced itself into history, and became every year an evil more uncontroilable till the present time. The use of the poppy capsules and of opium continued to be a part of practical medicine in China from the fifteenth century till the edict was issued, after which the use of opium was omitted in medical books, but that of the capsule was continued. The poppy therefore was still grown to supply druggists with capsules; but opium was only made surreptitiously when the imported article could not be had.

A similar light might be thrown on the history of Arabian medicine, in regard to the products of distillation, and the principles of medicine, from the Chinese side. The Chinese physicians learned from the Arabs, and the Arabs in their turn from the Chinese. China taught them alchemy and perhaps some points in medical theory. They taught China distillation, and sent her several drugs.

Travelers in Szechwen and in Rajputana agree in stating that the men of those provinces, though addicted to the use of opium, are vigorous and tall, and do not seem to look worse on account of indulging in this vice. The fact is that three or four in ten smokers are men who smoke without losing tae glow of health from their countenances. Some say that two in ten are such. They perform every duty. They look exceedingly well. When conversing with them, it may be noticed that they smoke. Yet they may for all that have been smoking twenty years.—*Peking Cor. London Academy.*

—On her last trip from Europe, the steamer Santiago came, in mid-ocean, upon a burning raft, which was drifting before the breeze on a smooth ocean sea without a soul on it. The fire was apparently freshly lighted, but there was no other trace of any person having been aboard of it for some time.—*Detroit Post.*

PITH AND POINT.

—One of the leaders of the Delaware Senate is Dr. Mustard. He draws well and is reckoned a very smart man.

—I don't rekollect doing ennything that I was just a little ashamed ov but what somebody remembered it, and was sure, once in a while, to put me in mind of it.—*Josh Billings.*

—We see that "fur-lined circulars are fashionable again." People had much better advertise in the newspapers than waste their money sending fur-lined circulars through the post-office.—*Boston Commercial Bulletin.*

—There are twenty Greeks in Chicago, hence when they meet there are ten tugs of war. The Secretary of the Navy should buy up those tugs of war without delay, and then we would have a navy.—*Texas Siftings.*

—If inventors and scientists assert that the wasted energy of Niagara Falls and of the swell of the ocean can be utilized and transmitted to run all the machinery of all the factories in the world, why can not a kind of harness be made to fit the lower jaw of a barber?—*Chicago Herald.*

—A gentleman was talking to the owner of a ferocious bull-dog, and asked him the question; "Do you think your dog would become fond of a stranger?" "Yes," replied the dog-fancier, "if he was raw, but he wouldn't if the stranger was cooked."

—A Brooklyn lady caught a burglar in her room and compelled him to marry her. Since this terrible punishment there has been a great falling off in the number of robberies in Brooklyn, and it is proposed to cut down the police force one-half. There are more ways than one to make burglary odious.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

—"Student" wants to know what is meant by "a dead letter." Well, a letter asking you to subscribe fifty dollars for the society for the amelioration of the condition of the worthy poor, comes about as near being a dead letter as anything we know of. If it isn't dead, in ten cases out of nine it might as well be.—*Norristown Herald.*

—An esthete has been delivering himself of an eloquent tirade against the invasion of the sacred domain of art by the meaner herd of trades-people and miscellaneous nobodies, and finally, rising to an alpine height of scorn, exclaims: "Aye, all of you here are Philistines—mere Philistines!" "Yes," said an old gentleman, softly, "we are Philistines, and I suppose that is why we are being assaulted with the jawbone of an ass."—*Chicago News.*

—Oh, the hog, the beautiful hog, curling his tail as he watches the dog; defying the law for his bread and meat; roaming at large through every street; hunting, grunting, nosing around, till the open front gate is sure to be found—with its hinges broken and ruined quite by the lovers that hung there Sunday night; it won't stay shut; it won't hang level; in walks the hog and raises the—Old Nick with the flower beds and other things.—*Montezuma (Ga.) Weekly.*

SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY.

—Albemarle County, Va., yearly ships a supply of Albemarle pippins to Queen Victoria. This famous apple can not be produced elsewhere than in Albemarle county, losing its distinctive flavor if grown in any other soil.

—The rice paper of commerce is not paper grown from rice, as its name would imply, but is the pith of a certain plant cut spirally with a very sharp knife, opened out into sheets, and pressed flat, when it is ready for the market.—*Chicago News.*

—Dispatches from Calcutta report that the Attock bridge across the Indus in the Punjab is nearly completed, and that trains are likely to run over it by the 1st of May. This will give India an unbroken line of railway from Calcutta to Pershawur, a distance of some 1,600 miles.

—Frank Kittredge, of Danville, Vt., has constructed a model for a new steam engine, whose chief distinction is that it does away entirely with the piston movement. Mr. Kittredge's engine consists of a deep rimmed wheel, with movable floats therein, something on the plan of a turbine water-wheel, and the steam is discharged against the inclosed wheel, which he claims will furnish a steady and continuous power, and more of it than can be procured from the piston movement.

—Industrial art now employs the skins of certain sharks in jewelry, as for sleeve buttons and the like—these, when dried and polished, almost equaling the choicest stones, and greatly resembling the fossil coral porites. The vertebræ of the shark are always in demand for canes. The opening filled with marrow during life is for this purpose fitted with a steel or iron rod, the side openings are filled with mother-of-pearl, and, when polished, the cane is decided ornamental.—*N. Y. Sun.*

—In an article published in one of the German scientific journals on the effect of the color of glass bottles on the liquids contained in them, some interesting facts are stated. It appears from this that liquors contained in colorless bottles, when exposed for some time to the light, acquire a disagreeable taste, notwithstanding the fact that they may have been of superior quality before being so treated; liquors contained in brown or green bottles, however, remain unchanged in quality, even if exposed to direct sunlight. Since, then, the results in question are due to the chemical action of light, it follows that red, orange, yellow, green or opaque bottles are essential to the preservation of liquors, while colorless, blue and violet ones are to be discarded.

—Among the various uses to which electricity may be put there is one of a very practical nature, which promises to effect a very great saving of property and life. It consists of an arrangement for the immediate stopping of an engine, by merely pressing a button similar to those by which electric bells and fire alarms are sounded. This button may be placed at any distance from the engine upon which it acts, and the inventor proposes that a number of such buttons should be placed throughout the factory or elsewhere where the apparatus is in use. The principle of the contrivance depends upon the action of an electro magnet upon the stop valve of the engine.—*Chicago Tribune.*

Our Young Folks.

SHE WHO LOVES BUTTER.

Nannie Nutter is fond of butter.
When lovely summer comes blooming in,
No need to ask, 'mid the grass a-flutter,
Holding a king cup under the chin,
"Do you love butter?" for Nannie Nutter—
"Oh, my!" say all, "how she does love butter!"

Nannie Nutter, so fond of butter,
Always asks for more on her bread;
Has even been known to pout and sputter
If mamma objected and some one said—
How could they help it—"Why, Nannie Nutter,
'Tis butter and bread, not bread and butter!"

With Nannie Nutter, 'tis butter, butter—
Butter on pudding potatoes, meat,
Tart, cream-pie. She'd thank you to shut her
Into a firkin with nothing to eat
But butter and butter, for Nannie Nutter,
You know, at present is friends with butter.

"Something to eat," they heard her utter
Before the lamps were lighted for tea.
She was given a slice of only butter;
Tasted a bit, but could not see.
Then spoke this famishing Nannie Nutter:
"Can't I have on it a little butter?"

—*Our Little Ones.*

A GIRL'S DARING.

Until she was nineteen years old Dorothy lived a very uneventful life, for one week was much the same as another in the placid existence of the village. On Sunday mornings, when the church bells began to ring, you would meet her walking over the moor with a springy step. Her shawl was gray, and her dress was of the most pronounced color that could be bought in the market-town. Her brown hair was gathered in a net, and her calm eyes looked from under an old-fashioned bonnet of straw. Her feet were always bare, but she carried her shoes and stockings slung over her shoulder. When she got near the church she sat down in the shade of a hedge and put them on; then she walked the rest of the distance with a crampled and civilized gait.

Every boat went away north one evening, and not a man remained in the Row, excepting three very old fellows, who were long past work of any kind. When a fisherman grows helpless with age, he is kept by his own people, and his days are passed in quietly smoking on a kitchen settle or in looking dimly out over the sea from the bench at the door. A southerly gale with a southerly sea came away in the night, and the boats could not beat down from the northward. By daylight they were all safe in a harbor about eighteen miles north of the village. The sea grew worse and worse, and the usual clouds of foam flew against the houses or skimmed away into the fields beyond. When the wind reached its height the sounds it made in the hollows were like distant firing of small arms, and the waves in the hollow rocks seemed to shake the ground over the cliffs. A little schooner came round the point running before the sea. She might have got clear away, because it was easy enough for her, had she clawed a short way out, risking the beam sea, to have made the harbor where the fishers were. But the skipper kept her close in, and presently she struck on a long tongue of rocks that trended far out eastward. The tops of her masts seemed nearly to meet, so it appeared as if she had broken her back. The seas flew sheer over her, and the men had to climb into the rigging. All the women were watching and waiting to see her go to pieces. There was no chance of getting a boat out, so the helpless villagers waited to see the men go down, and the women cried out in their shrill, piteous manner. Dorothy said: "Will she break up in an hour? If I thowt she would hing there I would be away for the life-boat." But the old men said. "You can never cross the burn." Four miles south, behind the point, there was a village where a life-boat was kept; but just half way a stream ran into the sea, and across this stream there was only a plank bridge. Half a mile below the bridge the water spread far over the broad sand and became very shallow and wide. Dorothy spoke no more, except to say: "I'll away." She ran across the moor for a mile, and then scrambled down to the sand, so that the tearing wind might not impede her. It was dangerous work for the next mile. Every yard of the way she had to splash through the foam, because the great waves were rolling up very near to the foot of the cliffs. An extra strong sea might have caught her off her feet, but she did not think of that; she only thought of saving her breath by escaping the direct onslaught of the wind. When she came to the mouth of the burn her heart failed her for a little. There was three-quarers of a mile of water, covered with creamy foam, and she did not know but what she might be taken out of her depth. Yet she determined to risk it, and plunged in at a run. The sand was hard under foot but she said, when the piled foam came softly up to her waist, she "felt gey funny." Halfway across she stumbled into a hole, caused by a whirling eddy, and she thought all was over; but her nerve never failed her, and she struggled till she got a footing again. When she reached the hard ground she was wet to the neck, and her hair was sodden with her one plunge "over head." Her clothes troubled her with their weight in crossing the moor; so she put off all she did not need; and pressed forward again. Presently she reached the house where the coxswain of the life-boat lived. She gasped out: "The schooner! On the Letch! Norrad."

The coxswain, who had seen the schooner go past, knew what was the matter. He said "Here, wife, look after the lass," and ran out. The "lass" needed looking after, for she had fainted. But her work was well done; the life-boat went round the point, ran north, and took six men ashore from the schooner. The captain had been washed overboard, but the others were saved by Dorothy's daring and endurance. The girl is as simple as ever, and she knows nothing whatever about Grace Darling. If she were offered any reward she would probably wonder why she should receive any.—*St. James' Gazette.*

One Rainy Day.

One day, it just rained and rained and rained at our house, and we had to stay in.

And every time we went to play anything, Aunt Nelia said: "Oh, stop that noise, children!"

And if you took anything, she said: "Let that be! let that be." And it was *awful* in the house.

I got a big shawl and spread it over three chairs, and I got my dollies and my dishes and played under the shawl and I asked Danny wouldn't he play "keep house" just to-day, because it was raining and he couldn't play out doors anyway.

I told him I'd lend him my "Dotty" and my "Sissy" and my very best dolly, "Helena,"—if he'd be real good to her. And I'd keep Rose and Violet and Matilda myself, and then we would have three children apiece.

Rose and Violet are twins. They are made out of two dumb-bells, with a long towel pinned around each of them. They look just exactly alike, and they've got round, bald heads just like *real* babies.

But Danny wouldn't play keep house. He said he'd never be a tom-girl and play with dolls, no matter if it rained forever and ever and ever:

And then he put his hands in his pockets and looked the way he always does when he *won't do it*. And then you know there isn't any use in teasing him.

But after a while it didn't rain so hard, and Aunt Nelia said we might go and play in the barn. But we must stay *in* the barn and not go out into the yard, even if it didn't rain one single drop.

We like to play in the barn.

There isn't anything in it but a big pile of hay—and in one corner there's lots of ears of corn.

We play Danny is a dentist. And the ears of corn are ladies come to have their teeth pulled.

I walk them along over the floor to Danny, and he screws the monkey-wrench down tight on one of the kernels—that's a tooth—and then he gives a pull and out it comes! And then I have to holler like everything for the lady, because it hurts her so.

Danny talks to the lady. *He* says: "Madam, I won't hurt you in the least." He heard a dentist say that once to a lady.

Danny had a tooth pulled that same time that the lady did, and he never hollered a bit when his tooth was pulled, and it hurt him *awful*—and bled and bled.

But the *lady* hollered.

Danny thinks she was a coward.

But *I* don't: I think it *did* hurt her. And Aunt Nelia said to Danny: "Wait till you have a double tooth out, and see if you don't holler, too!"

We pulled ever so many teeth that day in the barn. But after a while we got tired of playing that, and we wished we had the new little white pigs in the barn with us to play with. They were only three days old, and they were just as cunning and little as they could be.

Danny said he'd run across to the shed and get us one apiece to play with.

But it was awful muddy in the cow-yard, and I was afraid Aunt Nelia would scold if Danny got his shoes muddy.

But Danny said he would get Uncle Eben's big rubber boots off from the back porch and put on, and then he wouldn't get muddy a bit.

And so he went and got them. And he looked *so* funny with them on! they came clear up to his jacket on him.

And then he went to get the little pigs.

But afterwards Danny and me wished he hadn't gone for them at all.

He could not walk very well with the big boots on, and when he got most to the shed, he couldn't walk at all. He just couldn't take another step, and his boots sank way down. And it began to rain, and there was Danny sticking in the mud!

Pretty soon he stepped out of the rubber boots, and he began to pull at one of the boots, to get it out, and the boot flew up, and Danny fell right over backwards into the mud.

He got up and oh, he was just as *muddy!*

And then we had to go into the house, for I couldn't scrape the mud off—and Danny was so wet.

And Aunt Nelia scolded like everything, and she put Danny to bed—all alone up-stairs. And she made me stay down-stairs.

But she didn't know a *thing* about Uncle Eben's boots—yet.

And I was afraid to tell.

I could see one of them standing in the mud there yet—out of the kitchen window.

I kept looking to see if it was there—and it always was.

After a while Uncle Eben wanted his boots, and he said: "Where are my rubber boots?"

Then I had to show him where one of the boots was, and I told him how it got there, and he wasn't mad a bit. He laughed. But Aunt Nelia said:

"Well, I declare! If I hadn't sent that boy to bed already, I certainly should now!"

And when Uncle Eben went out and got his boot, it was full of water, clear to the top.—*Youth's Companion.*

What is Demanded of the Boston Reporter.

"This will never do," said the local editor to the new reporter. "You say that 'The man was killed.' That is too tame. You should have said that 'he was crushed into a shapeless mass,' or, his 'reeking corpse presented a ghastly sight.' Then you make the bald statement that 'the doctor was not needed.' 'The services of the physician were not called into requisition'—that's how you should have put it. That's journalism, that is. Then you say nothing of the 'sickening spectacle,' and you are painfully neglectful of the fact that 'the man's features were distorted out of all semblance of humanity,' and you haven't a word to say of 'scattered fragments' or of 'blood' or 'bruises' or 'the screams of the horrified spectators.' No, it will never do; journalism has no use for you, young man. Go into something more congenial; go into the ministry, or secure the position of lecturer to a deaf and dumb asylum."—*Boston Transcript.*

—When Mme. Nilsson, in Atlanta recently, sang "Way Down on the Suwanee River," all the colored people in the gallery cried. Mme. Nilsson, whose brothers and sisters are wedded to their peasant life in Sweden, will, with her adopted son, consider New York as her home.—*N. Y. Sun.*

—Dr. Laman, who proposes to supply New York City with water from the Adirondack region, says the estimated flow from the 2,000 square miles of that territory is 300,000,000,000 gallons daily, which could be brought to New York through a tunnel along the Hudson.